/144 cont./

122 the statement concerning the date when the report was re-
123 ceived in Wiljuisk agreed with its dispatch. /The remainder of p. 144, p. 145, and the first two paragraphs of p. 146 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign text. Page 146 continues as follows./

On September 7, at the mouth of the very considerable left tributary Ukikít, as Temír Jegór had prophesied, we met his older brother Nikofór, who held the position of a dessjátnik (a community office). While I made magnetic observations in spite of the bad weather, he told Czekanowsky something about the further course of the river, the places where people were to be found, and the like. In general, I must note here, the results of such inquiries are reliable to some extent only when they are made from different persons, completely /147/ independent of one another. All statements about distances are particularly unreliable; the number of days of travel is most indefinite, as we had opportunity to experience often enough. In addition there is the very common deliberate twisting of the truth, especially with reference to the trade routes. Since the Jakuten /Yakut/ settled here on the Olenék are all more or less middlemen between the Russian traders on the Lena and the Wiljuí /Vilyui/, on the one hand, and the Dolgan on the Anábara, on the other hand, it is obvious that they do not want to be seen on the maps by strangers whose intentions they do not know. Such a route passing by Temír Jegór's dwelling place led to the Dolgan.

122 On September 7 we passed a second considerable left
133 tributary with an especially wide mouth, the Bírekta, and on the next day the likewise quite large Butt. The tributaries from the right side are insignificant, for here the Lena with those belonging to it already comes too close. Unfortunately we could only supply ourselves with meat from Nikofór; we could not get a guide here either, because his son had gone to look for stray reindeer, which, it seems, is one of the chief occupations of these uncivilized peoples. /The last paragraph on p. 147 and the first two paragraphs on p. 148 are omitted in the translation; see the foreign text. Page 148 continues as follows./

/198 cont./

273 supervised, is simply not in a position to carry out this measure
273 with great strictness. On the Jenissei in particular, where trade is
437 much brisker than on the Lena, great quantities of liquor are sold
441 to the indigenous tribes by the merchants; the officials, even if they actually desired to resist bribery by the traders, are only rarely in a position to stop the mischief, for even though they now and then seize a shipment of liquor, they are usually obliged to hand it over again to the owner, who insists that it is needed for himself and his own workers. The thirst of a Russian, even though it may be colossal -- the climate also brings this about -- cannot very well /199/ be lawfully curtailed if it does not lead to excess. It is certain that the Russian government does at least as much as any other government in similar circumstances -- particularly the North American and English ones -- to acquaint the original inhabitants with the good aspects of civilization and to keep the corrupting ones away from them, but profit is as dear to the Russian merchants as to the foreign ones, and liquor, as is well known, is the favorite article of trade and the most profitable one for the traders everywhere.

122 Before our departure the leaders of the district assembled
123 here gave us a demonstration of their unselfishness which cannot be appreciated enough. Our guide Atschkássow had already definitely refused to accept any kind of remuneration for the service performed for us and for the large number of reindeer that had been used for our transport for weeks; when we now began to speak of remuneration here, the golowá told us that the upráwa had unanimously decided to transport us to the border of the ulússes without any recompense whatever. At our request this decision was put in writing by the secretary and signed by all the members of the upráwa, which was done by an impression of their seals, to which the secretary added the corresponding names. These quasi coats-of-arms, any symbol, a flower, an animal, and the like, blackened with soot, were pressed on paper. We did not fail to present this official document later to the isprawnik /ispravnik/ of the Werchojansk /Verkhoyansk/ district, to which the Shigansker uluss /Zhigansk ulus/ belongs, as well as to the

53:Tokarev and Gurvich E-4 (no date) 1964
RV2 Yakut RV2

of the toyon. This custom was a very typical and often extremely cruel form of exploitation. The winter upkeep of the livestock was a still more burdensome, enslaving agreement; in return for a head of cattle, the toyon usually paid 1 ruble, 50 kopeks or 2 rubles for the whole winter, whereas in actual fact the upkeep cost at least 5 rubles, and so it was only the poor peasants driven by need who entered into such agreements.

A still more typical custom, the origin of which in ancient times was connected with mutual assistance between clan members, but which later became in fact one of the forms of exploitation, was kumalaanism. A kumalaan was a poor peasant, a disabled person, an orphan or sometimes all the members of an impoverished family, who were assigned by the whole community to live for a certain time with a rich man or wealthy kinsman who would maintain them. Officially, the adoption of a kumalaan was regarded as an act of charity, and a way of helping a kinsman in need. But in actual fact the custom concealed the cruelest exploitation of unpaid labor. In many cases it was a disguised form of slavery and lasted a long time.

Another form of disguised slavery was the sale of children, which flourished particularly in the Olekminskiy Okrug. Parents who had reached the stage of abysmal poverty were often forced to sell their children, and well-off Yakuts sometimes bought them (when they had no children of their own) in order to bring them up, but more often in order to have unpaid labor. Their treatment of them was usually barbaric; they were half-starved and forced to do exhausting work. The demand for children was so extensive that in the Olekminskiy Okrug there were professionals (old women) who traded in children as an occupation.

There were also various forms of commercial exploitation, some of which, again, were inherent in the Yakut conditions. One such form for Yakutiya was the activity of the so-called "city-men." These were people, mainly from distant regions, who constantly made trips to towns where they had business contacts and sold and bought commodities on behalf of their fellow villagers in return for a commission from the latter. The city-men, apart from the agreed fee, could always obtain extra profits by speculating on the difference in prices, obtaining credit, and so on. Little by little the city-man began to trade in imported goods in his own ulus and turned into a full-fledged merchant. This was one of the ways in which the new Yakut commercial bourgeoisie formed side by side with the semifeudal toyons.

By the end of the 19th century, the Yakut commercial bourgeoisie was already a strong force. The Yakut merchants not only exploited their own fellow townsmen, but also penetrated into the taiga, into the Evenk and Yukagir hunting camps, where they gave the hunters liquor and enslaved them in usurious debt. In the trading regions, in the outlying parts of Yakutiya, Yakut (and Russian) trade capital enslaved the people in the most merciless ways.

As a result of all this highly varied and extremely cruel exploitation, the position of the masses of the Yakut population was lamentable. The poor people sometimes went hungry the whole year around, even in the summer, during the peak season when the hard work of haymaking needed a sound diet. "The Yakut does not take much notice of the fact that his children are always half-starved," wrote V. F. Troshchanskiy, "both because this is the normal state of affairs for the majority of Yakut children, and also because he himself, his wife, his very old parents, his livestock, his dog and his cat are half-starved